

SULFOXAFLOR

BACKGROUND:

- Sulfoxaflor is a sulfoximine, a newer insecticide class that was first registered by EPA in 2013.
- It is effective against pests that are becoming resistant to carbamate, neonicotinoid, organophosphate, and pyrethroid insecticides.
- The Ninth Circuit vacated EPA's 2013 registration on the ground that the registration had insufficient data on the effects on bees.
- EPA then issued a cancellation order to address the use of existing stocks of pesticide products.
- In 2016, EPA reevaluated the data and approved registrations for crops that do not attract bees and for crops where sulfoxaflor would be applied when bees would not be present.
- In July 2019, EPA completed its review of over 45 registrant-submitted studies that gave EPA additional data on the potential for long-term effects on bees. EPA used this data to conduct a new comprehensive risk assessment and made the data available online.
- Based on this assessment, in July 2019 EPA restored the remainder of the previously approved uses, added new uses, and removed some of the application restrictions from the 2016 registration. EPA's updated requirements for product labels included crop-specific restrictions and pollinator protection language.
- In August 2019, the Center for Biological Diversity challenged EPA's sulfoxaflor decision.

KEY POINTS:

- Sulfoxaflor is effective against difficult pests that carbamates, neonicotinoids, organophosphates, and pyrethroids fail to control. There are few viable alternatives for sulfoxaflor for some crop pests. In many cases, alternative insecticides need to be applied repeatedly, whereas sulfoxaflor typically requires fewer applications, thus posing less risk to non-target wildlife and plants.
- Before granting the registration, EPA had received dozens of emergency exemption requests from states to use sulfoxaflor on cotton and soybean crops due to insect infestations that could not be controlled with other insecticides.
- The pollinator data reviewed by EPA to support sulfoxaflor uses is one of the largest sets of pollinator data ever obtained by EPA.
- EPA's 2019 decision ensures that, when used according to the label, sulfoxaflor poses no significant risk to human health and poses lower risk to non-target wildlife (including pollinators) than registered alternatives.
- EPA determined that sulfoxaflor's benefits for these uses outweighed the risks, and additional restrictions further reduced risks. The additional restrictions include: notifying known beekeepers within 1 mile of the treatment area 48 hours before the product is used; limiting application to times when managed bees and native pollinators are least active; limiting pre- and post-bloom applications on citrus, ornamentals, fruit and nut trees and on fruit vine and low growing berries, and trees.

TALKING POINTS:

- In July 2019, EPA granted a registration for the insecticide Sulfoxaflor, based on the most extensive set of pollinator studies (over 45 studies) ever compiled by the Agency. EPA is extremely confident that our extensive pollinator protections will be effective.
- This action provides long-term certainty for U.S. growers to use an important tool to protect crops and avoid potentially significant economic losses, while maintaining strong protection for pollinators.